



# Montgomery County Council

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From the Office of Councilmember Valerie Ervin

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## Montgomery Councilmember Valerie Ervin Seeks To Have County Enhance Commitment for Child Care Subsidies

*At Committee Worksession on Thursday, April 26, She Will  
Say Reduced Subsidies Have Led to 'Perfect Storm Brewing'*

ROCKVILLE, Md., April 25, 2012—Montgomery County Councilmember Valerie Ervin, chair of the County Council's Education Committee and a strong advocate for expanded pre-kindergarten services including child care subsidies, at 1:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 26, will tell a joint meeting of the County's Education Committee and Health and Human Services Committee that Montgomery must enhance its support of child care subsidies.

The Education Committee, which includes Councilmembers Phil Andrews and Craig Rice, and the Health and Human Services Committee, which is chaired by George Leventhal and includes Councilmembers Rice and Nancy Navarro, will meet in the Seventh Floor Hearing Room of the Council Office Building at 100 Maryland Ave. in Rockville. The meeting will be televised live by County Cable Montgomery (CCM—Cable Channel 6 on Comcast and RCN, Channel 30 on Verizon).

"Montgomery County parents, children and providers are at a crossroads," said Councilmember Ervin. "The County has reduced child care subsidies for three years and a perfect storm is brewing. These reductions to child care subsidies not only impact access to quality child care, they also impact the operation of local, small businesses and threaten the economic viability of our county. As the Council's leader for early childhood education, I hope this discussion will reengage key policy makers to our commitment to invest in early childhood education."

Thursday's worksession will provide an update on preschool services in the County and will open a discussion on state and local child care subsidy programs. The discussion will include a review of the recently released state report on kindergarten readiness that shows the County achieved a seven percent increase in kindergarten children fully ready for school from the 2010-11 school year to the 2011-12 year. Only two other jurisdictions in the state achieved greater increases in readiness during this period.

However, that success is often based on early care that children receive. The state's Purchase of Care (POC) and the County's Working Parents Assistance (WPA) programs are the two child care subsidy programs serving County residents. The committees recently learned that, in February 2011, the state instituted a waitlist for the POC program. As a result of growing demand, the WPA program implemented a waitlist effective July 1, 2011. Committee members also heard about the substantial co-pays required of families to participate in the WPA program and expressed the need to revisit childcare subsidy policies with the economy rebounds.

The changes in the programs have resulted in the following increases: The waitlist for POC increased from Aug. 31, 2011 from 670 families (1,116 children) to 1,152 families (1,904 children) as of Feb. 29, 2012. The WPA waitlist during that period increased from 39 families (56 children) to 94 families (147 children).

There is a \$9 million reduction to the child care subsidy program in the state budget. The Maryland State Department of Education has not announced how the reduction will impact local jurisdictions or expand the POC waitlist.

The lack of funding for child care subsidies affects the ability of families to access quality child care, which in turn may affect the educational outcomes for children when they arrive in kindergarten as they progress through school.

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